

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed December 2, 2003, Claims 1-22 and 25 were pending for consideration. These claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,639,476 to Oshlack et al. (hereinafter "Oshlack").

On May 14, 2004 Applicants representative held an in-person interview with Examiner James Spear. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Spear for his time and attention to the present matter. During the interview various aspects of the present invention and the Oshlack reference were discussed. Ultimately, the Examiner indicated as recorded in his interview summary, that amendment of the method claims to parallel the composition claims, and incorporation of the mechanical strength limitations of 18 to 27 N would overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection in view of the Oshlack reference.

Accordingly, by the present amendment, each of the independent claims, namely, Claims 1, 17, and 18 have been amended to include the mechanical strength limitations recited above. Further, Claims 10 and 22 have been amended to correct typographical errors. Support for such amendments may be found in the specification, *inter alia*, in Table 5 on page 11, line 10 of the specification. Therefore, no new matter is introduced by the present amendment. Further, it is to be noted that such amendments are made solely for the purposes of expediting prosecution of the present case, and without prejudice to Applicants' right to pursue canceled or sacrificed subject matter in a future patent application. As a result of the present amendment, Claims 1-22 and 25 remain pending for consideration, and consideration thereof in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

As noted above, in the office action mailed December 2, 2003, Claims 1-22 and 25 were rejected as allegedly obvious in view of the Oshlack reference. Applicants respectfully submit that such rejection is rendered moot by the present claim amendments in view of the personal interview held with Examiner James Spear on May 14, 2004 as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants believe that Claims 1-22 and 25 present allowable subject matter and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. If any impediment to the allowance of these claims remains after consideration of the present amendment and the above remarks, and such impediment could be removed during a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone Mr. David Osborne, or in his absence, the undersigned attorney at (801) 566-6633, so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Please charge any additional fees except for Issue Fee or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-0100.

Dated this 31st day of May, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Wayne Western
M. Wayne Western
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 22,788

David W. Osborne
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 44,989

Of:

THORPE NORTH & WESTERN, LLP
Customer No. 28.122
8180 South 700 East, Suite 200
Sandy, Utah 84070
(801) 566-6633

MWW
MWW/DWO